

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 FCSC-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00

PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EURE-00 L-02 /074 W

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P R 211510Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7516

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION GENEVA

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GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SHERER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, CZ, US

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS RE US-CZECHOSLOVAK CLAIMS AGREEMENT

REF: VIENNA 0425 NOTAL

1. DEPARTMENT IS NO DOUBT AWARE THAT ERRONEOUS REPORT OF "CZECHOSLOVAK RENUNCIATION OF CLAIMS AGREEMENT" HAS BEEN POPPING UP IN A NUMBER OF PLACES.

2. PRAGUE AP REPRESENTATPXE EVA DRAPALOVA TELEPHONED JANUARY 16 TO REPORT WITH SOME HEAT THAT AP VIENNA (WHERE HER STORIES ARE FILED) REWROTE HER LEAD AND INSERTED ERRONEOUS NOTION OF "CZECH REJECTION," WHICH WAS NOT IN HER ORIGINAL STORY AT ALL. AS REFTTEL MADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CLEAR, ERRONEOUS STORY GOT SPREAD AROUND IN VIENNA AND

WAS ALSO PICKED UP THERE FOR LE MONDE BY MANUEL LUCBERT.
WE HAVE HAD NUMEROUS INQUIRIES FROM PRESS AND OTHER
EMBASSIES HERE, AND THESE SEEM TO BE CONTINUING.

3. VIEW GIVEN TO EMBASSY VIENNA BY CZECH EMBASSY (REFTEL)
IS OF COURSE CORRECT, I.E. THAT IT WAS US SIDE THAT
BLOCKED FURTHER MOVEMENT ON CLAIMS AGREEMENT, AND THAT
CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS NOT RENOUNCED OR REJECTED ANY AGREE-
MENT. IT WAS QUITE CLEAR FROM AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK JANUARY 15 THAT THIS WAS THE CASE.

4. ROOT OF THE ERROR, AND BASIS FOR AP VIENNA'S GOOF
WHICH OTHERS HAVE PICKED UP AND RE-GOOFED, MAY HAVE BEEN
CZECH PRESS AGENCY CTK'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS RELEASE
OF JANUARY 15 REPORTING JOINT SESSION OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEES OF BOTH HOUSES OF FEDERAL ASSEMBLY. RELEASE
SAID US CONGRESS "APPROVED AN AMENDMENT WHICH MAKES IT
IMPOSSIBLE FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT ON
PROPERTY INITIALED JULY 5, 1974." RUDE PRAVO CARRIED
CTK RELEASE JANUARY 16 (PRAGUE 128) BUT CZECH VERSION
MERELY REFERRED TO AMENDMENT "WHICH MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE
TO SIGN" AGREEMENT. POOR TRANSLATION HELPED MAKE
ERROR POSSIBLE.

5. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT RECENT WRINKLES ON THE FACE
OF DETENTE (E.G. AS DISCUSSED IN PARIS 01640) MAKE IT
NATURAL FOR JOURNALISTS TO SPECULATE ABOUT POSSIBLE
RETROGRADE STEPS EACH SIDE MIGHT BE TAKING. PRESS
STORIES ON CZECH REFUSAL TO GO AHEAD WITH PLANNED
OPENING OF US CON GEN BRATISLAVA (BASED OF COURSE ON
FACT) ENCOURAGE THIS TENDENCY, AND WE HAVE EVEN HAD
SOME INQUIRIES ABOUT POSSIBLE REFUSAL TO GO THROUGH
WITH RATIFICATION OF US-CSSR CONSULAR CONVENTION.

6. WE ASSUME THAT SUCH STORIES DO NO ONE ANY GOOD AT
THIS TIME, AND WE ARE TAKING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO
STRAIGHTEN OUT THE RECORD AS FAR AS CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS
CONCERNED. IF DEPARTMENT AGREES, IT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER
A BRIEF STATEMENT ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA AT A NOON PRESS
BRIEFING STATING THE FACTS. EMBASSY WOULD HOPE THAT
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IF SUCH A RECTIFICATION WERE MADE, IT COULD INCLUDE
MENTION THAT USG IS STUDYING REMIFICATIONS OF TRADE
BILL AND IS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO GO FORWARD WITH POLICY
OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
PERRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, AGREEMENTS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, DEBTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PRAGUE00151
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750022-0743
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750133/aaaabdhx.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 VIENNA 0425
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <16 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS REPORTS RE US-CZECHOSLOVAK CLAIMS AGREEMENT
TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, CZ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006